

Summary of the President's Vietnam Speech
For Ambassadors Bunker, Bruce, Godley and Swank

In his Wednesday night television speech, the President will announce a major new initiative for peace which will be placed on the Paris conference table Thursday morning by U.S. Ambassador Bruce and South Vietnam Ambassador Lam. He notes that the new peace initiative has the full support of the governments of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The initiative has five elements: ceasefire in place; Indochina Peace Conference; U.S. willingness to negotiate an agreed timetable for complete withdrawals as part of an overall settlement; a political settlement based on principles first described on April 20; and the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war.

Ceasefire

The President will propose that all armed forces throughout Indochina cease firing their weapons and remain in the positions they now hold. He calls for immediate negotiations, and while the proposal is put forward without preconditions, he says that the following general principles should apply.

A ceasefire:

-- must be effectively supervised by international observers

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as well as by the parties themselves;

-- should allow no increase in foreign combat forces in
any of the nations of Indochina;

-- should cause all kinds of warfare to stop, from bombing
to acts of terror;

-- should encompass not only the fighting in Vietnam but
in all of Indochina; and

-- should be part of a general move to end the war.

Indochina Peace Conference

The President states that an international conference is
needed to deal with the conflict in all three states of Indochina. The
essential elements of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Accords remain valid
as the basis for settlement of problems between states in the Indochina
area. The Paris talks will remain our primary forum for reaching a
negotiated settlement until such time as a broader international
conference produces serious negotiations.

Withdrawals

The President states that we are prepared to withdraw
completely as part of an overall settlement based on the principles he
has spelled out previously and the proposals he is making in this speech.

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Political Settlement

He asks the other side to join us in a search for a settlement.

Three principles guide our approach:

-- We seek a political solution that reflects the will of the South Vietnamese people.

-- A fair political solution should reflect the existing relationship of political forces.

-- We will abide by the outcome of the political process agreed upon.

The President points out that the other side is not objecting to a few personalities but rather seeking to dismantle the organized non-communist forces in South Vietnam and exclude whomever they wish from government. This is totally unacceptable.

Prisoners of War

The President proposes that all prisoners of war, without exception and without condition, be released now to return to the place of their choice. He adds that all journalists and other innocent civilian victims of the conflict should be released as well.

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